Calgary metro

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2016

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Your essential daily news | MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2016

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ELIZABETH CAMERON/FOR METRO

Tough decisions for United Way

NOT-FOR-PROFITS

Economic woes mean some groups are losing funding

Brodie Thomas
Metro | Calgary

Twenty Calgary not-for-profit groups will be facing a new reality in 2017 as they recently learned their funding from United Way has not been renewed.

United Way Calgary and Area president and CEO Lucy Miller told Metro that the money brought in from their annual campaign continues to decline from $59.8 three years ago to $55.2 million last year.

While totals for the 2016 campaign aren't in yet, she said they don't anticipate it will be close to the $55.2-million mark, adding it could be as much as several million dollars less.

A list provided by the United Way of its 2017 agency partners was missing 20 names of groups that had been partners in 2016.

Those groups that did not have their funding renewed provide a broad range of services, including addictions recovery, assistance for abused women, and help for seniors and the disabled.

They received letters in the past few weeks explaining their funding had not been renewed.

Kirk Reynolds, manager of programs and services in Calgary with Spinal Cord Injury Alberta, said they would lose about 18 to 20 per cent of their budget.

"It will significantly cause us to reimagine our structure and downsize our organization throughout the province," said Reynolds.

He added that they were grateful for the funding they had received in the past, and understood it had everything to do with the economic downturn.

"It's too bad it has gotten down to the not-for-profits," said Reynolds.

Morecoverage, pg.5

cold HEADS, *warm* HEARTS

Friends start clothing drive to help Calgary's homeless

metroNEWS

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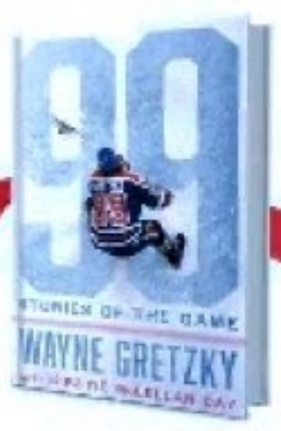

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Wisdom, a Laysan albatross called the world's oldest known seabird, is expecting again.

Hundreds protest carbon tax

ENERGY

Rally hosted by Rebel Media draws political crowd, citizens

Josie Lukey
For Metro | Calgary

1

2

1 Ezra Levant hosted the second anti-carbon tax rally by Rebel Media on Sunday in the province. Hundreds of supporters showed up to voice their concerns.

2 More than 800 protesters showed up to the rally holding up a variety of signs indicating their disapproval of the Notley government and the carbon tax. ELIZABETH CAMERON / FOR METRO

"Axe the tax," is what hundreds of Albertans were chanting at a rally protesting the carbon tax on Sunday.

Hosted by Rebel Media's Ezra Levant at the Westin, the rally voiced the concerns of political leaders and Albertans about an economy-wide carbon tax of $20 per tonne that was announced by Rachel Notley's NDP government last November.

The tax is scheduled to come into effect on Jan. 1 2017.

According to Leela Aheer, MLA for Chestermere-Rocky View, she's been working hard in the legislature to ensure the NDP government is aware of the impact the carbon tax will have on Albertans.

"We will fight this carbon tax. We will." said Aheer, who added that if Ottawa imposes a carbon tax, they would seek every legal option possible to fight it.

Three Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) leadership candidates were in attendance; Chris Alexander, Brad Trost and Kellie Leitch — each, unsurprisingly voicing disapproval for the tax and approval for pipelines.

> "Let's protect our beautiful wilderness but let's do it without killing our economy." Chris Alexander

"Let's build all the pipelines that the market demands, let's protect our beautiful wilderness but let's do it without killing our economy," said Alexander.

Calgary Raging Grannies, supporters of the carbon tax, were escorted out of the hotel and were not allowed back inside according to hotel security.

According to volunteers, there were no buses from Edmonton bringing people to Calgary as was the case in Edmonton more than one week ago.

Levant said the total cost of the conference room at the Westin, downtown including sound equipment was around $14,000. Volunteers at the rally went around to supporters in a "bucket brigade," asking for donations to help fund Rebel Media's efforts.

Controversy after Edmonton's anti-carbon tax rally sprung up after members chanted "lock her up," about Premier Notley's energy policy. The same chant sprung up at the Calgary rally multiple times by members as well.

On Sunday, Levant said although he wouldn't scold any chants, he doesn't want to see anyone locked up.

"I don't want to lock up anyone up actually. What I want to do is I want to unlock the potential of this province," said Levant.

INVESTIGATION

Two cats and a rabbit saved from house fire

Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

The Calgary Fire Department successfully rescued several pets from a two-alarm fire in the 100 block of Pensacola Close SE on Sunday around the noon hour.

Cali Eyles, who lived in the home, was at church when he received a call that his detached garage was on fire.

By the time he arrived, it had spread and severely damaged the house.

Fire crews were able to save a rabbit and two cats from the burning home.

After the first crew arrived, a second was called in to help fight the blaze, and firefighters entered the home to extinguish it.

Officials said there was significant damage to the home and the garage, meaning the residents won't be able to move back in.

Eyles said he's still recovering from the shock.

"Going to try and level my head man, I have no clue, this is the first time this has happened to me," he said. "Hoping for the best and praying to God now."

His neighbour, George Munro, suffered minor damage to his home and his door, as officials broke down the door to get his dog out — which he was thankful for. He was not home either when the fire broke out.

"We all came home as fast as we could," Munro said. "Just waiting for the insurance to come to take a look."

Investigators are looking into the cause of the fire.

Fire crews are still investigating the cause of the fire, which they believe started in the garage. AARON CHATHA/METRO

With more people signing up for Car2go service, the company is expanding its home zone. Users pay a premium to take cars outside the home zones. METRO FILE

Car2go zone grows

CAR-SHARING

Company responds to feedback from area customers

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

Bruce Chrumka has used the carsharing service notably less since Car2go shrunk their home zone in September 2015.

What was a simple ritual, reserving the smart car he'd parked in front of his Wildwood home, wasn't as convenient when the zone moved a block away from home, and even less so for his friends in Highwood.

"I have a personal vehicle, but I had been using it to zip downtown and take a CTrain," Chrumka said.

"We also used to take a Car2go and park at our friend's, take a cab home if we were there for a late dinner."

He got a personal call from the company back in 2015, because he uses the carsharing services about 400 times a year. Now, he's happy to see the service return close to home.

More than a year ago, Car2go announced they would be shrinking their home zone 36 per cent because of a "high disparity" of usage in those areas over three years. At the time, the data showed the fringe areas (which were cut) only garnered about four per cent of the city's overall use.

> A lot of people were asking if we would move back, when we would move back.
> Jon Wycoco

But in 2016, all of that changed.

According to Car2go Calgary General Manager Jon Wycoco, after they shrunk the zones, members in Glamorgan, Glenbrook, Glendale, Westgate, and Wildwood not only asked for service to return in their area, they also saw a bump in membership for those communities.

"Just reviewing where members lived, and what we had been hearing from them, when we did an analysis of that area, we realized this is the right time to be there," said Wycoco.

"A lot of people were asking if we would move back, when we would move back. Over the last year and a bit we realized."

Chrumka said it would be great to see the carshare service expanded throughout Calgary.

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WestJet helps man reach sick father

FAMILY

80-year-old was on life support near Toronto

Josie Lukey
For Metro | Calgary

Yasir Haqqi, with his father, Shuja, after he was hospitalized and put on life support late November. CONTRIBUTED

Yasir Haqqi raced to the YYC Calgary International Airport (YYC) with only a backpack on his shoulders and his father in mind.

Earlier in the day, he received a phone call from nurses at a hospital in Mississauga, Ont. that his father, Shuja, was in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) on life support. But when he finally made it to YYC, he reached the counter too late to get on the last flight out to Toronto.

"It was very emotional, when you are in a situation you want to get to your loved one," said Yasir. "I told the counter lady that I only have one dad and my dad is in the ICU on life support and I have to get there immediately."

It was then the WestJet representative searched through a variety of flights looking for an earlier route. When there were no other options, the woman fast-tracked Yasir through the airport. He made it onto the flight at the very last boarding call. At 1 a.m. the plane landed in Toronto, where Yasir went straight to the hospital and arrived to see his brother and sister waiting for him at the bedside of his nearly 80-year-old father.

"(The) next morning me, my brother and sister was with him as he opened his eyes for brief moment in ICU. He had smile on his face as he saw us," said Yasir.

Shuja was then taken off life support and was placed in observation where he's expected to recover.

"My dad has recovered, he's still in the hospital. But he's started to talk and he's started to feed himself gradually," said Yasir.

Now, Yasir said he wants to find the WestJet woman who helped him get to his father and thank her. But although Yasir said he couldn't remember the exact name of the woman who helped him, it was similar to "Jackie," or "Jacqueline."

"I love WestJet and because of the very helpful staff I was able to be with my father," said Yasir.

FUNDING

United Way tightens application system

Brodie Thomas
Metro | Calgary

The outgoing president and CEO of the United Way of Calgary and Area says changing times forced her organization to come up with new ways to allocate funding to its agency partners.

"There is only so much money to go around and if we're not very intentional about how we invest, we're never going to really have a significant impact on some of the big issues that are holding our city back," said Miller, who is set to retire at the end of the month.

Several organizations that had previously received funding from the United Way were recently notified that they wouldn't be getting the money this year.

But Miller said that's the result of her organization's move to a "request for proposal" (RFP) model for determining which groups would be funded, which reflects the changing business landscape in Calgary

"We've always linked funding directly to the outcomes we are trying to achieve. For many years, many of the same agencies were funded year after year," said Miller.

She said the RFP application process is more rigorous, and more closely linked to the outcomes the United Way is trying to achieve.

Monique Auffery, executive director of Discovery House Family Violence Prevention Society, said her organization took part in the RFP process but did not have their funding renewed.

"We really believed that the proposal we put forward met with their three buckets for strong communities — so they were mental health, social inclusion and domestic violence," said Auffery. "For us it really was about prevention. It was a bit of a surprise for us."

She added that they've been invited to reapply for funding in the spring, and she was told that their application was strong.

Miller said they tried to level the playing field as much as possible in the process, noting they had a number of workshops to help organizations of all sizes through the RFP process step-by-step.

She said just as oil and gas companies have consolidated, she believes there's room for not-for-profit groups to partner up when they're offering similar services in a bid to reduce costs.

Lucy Miller, president and CEO of the United Way of Calgary and Area. CONTRIBUTED

"No one can expect to operate in a "business as usual" mindset. Every business including non-profits has to be looking at ways to work more efficiently and more effectively," said Miller.

Give babies a boost: Charity

GIVING

No Crib for a Bed campaign appeals for more partners

Brodie Thomas
Metro | Calgary

A Calgary charity that helps infants get a healthy start in life is putting out an appeal to Calgary businesses.

NeighbourLink Calgary is again holding its No Crib For a Bed campaign. Each year, businesses take a crib from the organization and fill it with baby essentials.

This year, organizer Chris Jost said although many cribs have gone out, they're still hoping to get 25 more out in the city before Christmas.

He said organizations can buy their own crib, which will be treated as a donation and go to a needy family, or they can borrow one from NeighbourLink.

"We take the cribs at the holiday season, and put them in the community to double dip on the gift, because it helps us raise all these essentials," he said.

Chris Jost says the No Crib For a Bed campaign needs anything a baby could need — except formula and diapers as those are covered. JENNIFER FRIESEN / FOR METRO

Jost said this year, they're not looking for formula or diapers because they now have those covered.

"Through a partnership with Loblaws, we have an abundance of diapers and formula that we purchased at incredible savings," he said.

What they do need is just about anything else: baby wipes, shampoo, cream, clothing and more.

Jost said the program run with the donations — called Infant Care Under 2 (ICU2) — is one-of-a-kind in North America. Its focus is not just on making sure infants have diapers and formula, but on brain development.

Clients who sign up commit to spending 20 hours a month to either working on their parenting skills, or on upgrading their skills to get out of poverty.

Lisa Barton, co-ordinator of the Successful Young Parents program at the Families Matter Society, said the supplies she receives from the program help new parents in need stop worrying about coming up with the bare essentials, so they can focus on their child.

"It helps supplement some of those worries. We can have them come into the centre and doing things around nursery rhymes and singing and attachment between mom and dad and baby," she said.

Jost said anyone who wants to receive a loan of a crib for their office, or take part in any way, should email him at the following address: info@neighbourlinkcalgary.ca.

OLYMPIC PARK

Ski hill is totally tubular

If skis and snowboards aren't your thing, Canada Olympic Park has something else on offer.

Winsport announced the Acura Tube Park,to open Dec. 17 on the east side of COP ski hill.

"Our primary mission is to give Canadians the opportunity to discover, develop and excel in sport," said WinSport COO John Sutherland in a release. "However, maintaining a facility like ours is costly and we need to balance our programming with businesses that allow us to welcome families and generate revenue to operate and maintain our facilities."

WInsport hopes to keep the park open until March. Tickets are sold in two-, three- and four-hour increments. For more information, visit winsport.ca. METRO

> We need to balance our programming with businesses that allow us to welcome families.
> John Sutherland

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Women hand out warmth to needy

COMPASSION

Thinking of homeless in cold leads to clothing drive

Lucy Scholey
Metro | Ottawa

Cold hands, warm hearts, as some people say. And for two Calgary women who want to help homeless in freezing temperatures, that statement couldn't be any more true.

Stacks upon stacks of sweaters, winter jackets, blankets and socks line the floor and couch of Amber Storozynsky's home.

It's all in an effort to give a hand to Calgary's homeless given the freezing temperatures in the city according to Storozynsky, who late last week decided she wanted to help.

"People were dropping off bags at my work yesterday. I came home from work yesterday and there was garbage bags at my front door." said Storozynsky who made a Facebook appeal asking for donations.

A report from The Calgary Homeless Foundation released in October said Calgary had a homeless population of more than 3,200.

Armed with more than 25 bins and garbage bags filled with winter clothing items and $300 worth of Tim Hortons and Subway gift cards, Storozynsky along with Tressa Lusty handed out the items around Calgary.

"I'm sure they live a hard enough life that they don't need to be pointed fingers at but they need to just have a helping hand.

"Somebody to say, 'Hey, you know what? You do matter,'" said Lusty who wanted to help after recently losing a homeless loved one in Calgary as a result of the freezing temperatures.

According to Storozynsky, even though Calgarians may not have a lot of money to donate, we do live in a climate that allows us to donate some outgrown winter items.

"We live in Calgary, we have lots of winter stuff," said Storozynsky.

Storozynsky is also giving volunteers a box to keep in the trunk of their vehicles, just in case they see an individual in need of a pair of mittens or other winter gear.

Storozynsky said any items that aren't given away will be donated to homeless shelters across Calgary.

> **They don't need to be pointed fingers at but they need to just have a helping hand. Somebody to say, 'Hey, you know what? You do matter.'** Tressa Lusty

Tressa Lusty, left, and Amber Storozynsky said they have collected more than 25 bins and garbage bags filled with winter clothing items and $300 worth of Tim Hortons and Subway gift cards. ELIZABETH CAMERON/FOR METRO

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Santa caters to special needs

HOLIDAYS

Lights, crowds, sounds can overwhelm some children

Elizabeth Cameron
For Metro | Calgary

Christine Tracey and her son Christian enjoyed visiting Santa in a stress-free environment. ELIZABETH CAMERON/FOR METRO

The hustle and bustle of Christmas shoppers, noise and waiting in long lineups to sit on Santa's knee can be overwhelming for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

This year, Bass Pro Shop at CrossIron Mills opened its doors early on select dates for families with "sensory sensitive children" to visit Santa in peace.

No lineup, no blaring holiday music and no crowds. Just Santa, hot chocolate and plenty of understanding.

"We want these families to have the same wonderful experience everyone else has," said Stacey Hartung, who works at Bass Pro and was greeting families arriving for their visit.

"When they said they were doing this, I couldn't believe it. I was ecstatic," said Hartung, who has a history of volunteering with children who have special needs.

He said one mother broke down in tears because she was so thankful that her children could visit Santa in an ASD-friendly environment.

Children with ASD, which includes autism, Asperger syndrome and anything in between, can experience challenges with communication, socialization and behaviour.

Stimulus such as lights, sounds and crowds can overwhelm these children and cause them to feel stressed or upset.

According to Autism Speaks Canada, one in 68 children are currently diagnosed with ASD.

Christine Tracey said her nine-year-old son Christian, who has autism, had an anxiety-free visit with Santa.

"I think he left Santa's lap about four times, but it was great. There was no pressure for him to sit and look perfect, and there was no line at all," Tracey said.

> **"It brings us a little bit of normalcy and a lot less stress.**
> Christine Tracey

She said Christian becomes overwhelmed by crowds, which means visiting the mall to see Santa alongside hundreds of other families is simply not possible.

"If I took him to the mall, it could end up being a negative experience and we might never get him back there," Tracey said.

She described Christian as a happy, energetic child who loves to play with others.

It eased her stress to know that staff at the store were prepared for behavioural or anxiety issues to arise, and that those would be met with patience and understanding.

"It (brings us) a little bit of normalcy and a lot less stress," Tracey said, adding she will bring Christian back next year if the program continues.

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FAMILIES AT CHRISTMAS

Capturing 'unique, timeless' portraits

Photographer Ben Logan spent this weekend helping Calgarians capture the most magical part of Christmas.

No — not Santa Claus, but something far more precious: family. The 26-year-old photographer was offering free family photos at Olympic Plaza to anyone who dropped by while he was there. He was also collecting donations for the Calgary Interfaith Food Bank.

"There's something unique and timeless about Christmas photos," he said. "I really want to be able to provide that for a city in need. Over the last couple of years, so many people have lost jobs and haven't been able to get themselves back up off the ground."

From noon to 6 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday, Logan was bundled up tight shooting photos outdoors, with the help of his girlfriend Celeste. The temperature was beyond freezing, but Logan said it's worth it for the view. Olympic Plaza is decorated for Christmas, and from his spot, he could fit the Calgary tower in the background.

He also had a number of props in hand, from Santa and reindeer hats to giant candy canes.

If the cold was numbing his fingertips, the smiling families were warming his heart. "I'm so overwhelmingly happy," he beamed. "This brings out the best feelings on the inside."

For the perfect Christmas family photo, Logan doesn't require much. The background helps a ton, but mostly it's the attitude of his subjects.

"Just people having a good time. I like seeing people being silly and cheesy — it always makes for a great photo."

He's been taking photos for about 15 years and runs his own businesses, Bear N' Tree and was looking for a way to use his own skill set to give back to Calgary.

He'll be back to take more snaps on Dec. 17 and 18, from noon until 6 p.m.

AARON CHATHA / METRO

Photographer Ben Logan and his girlfriend Celeste braved the cold to take Christmas family portraits. AARON CHATHA/METRO

Jasmine Fairbairn credits Loose Moose for training her — and now returns to the stage as a headlining comic. CONTRIBUTED

Return to home stage

ENTERTAINMENT

Comedian says routine about her parental mess-ups

Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

Jasmine Fairbairn is coming home.

After cutting her teeth at Calgary's famous Loose Moose theatre as a teenager, the standup comic took her act to the outback, and spent the last couple of years honing her jokes in Australia.

Now she's coming back to Calgary to the stage where is all began – and with a killer Australian accent.

"I've gotten really good at adding their lingo into my everyday chatter. Like, 'aww yee.' Yee is a big Australian thing," she explained. "Or they have the weirdest sentences, like, 'sillier than a bum full of smarties.' To me, I feel like Australian is kind of like Shakespeare – really vivid, but with a lot more swear words."

Fairbairn said she owes her style to the Loose Moose stage, where she learned the basic tenets of improvisation.

"The reason why I think I've been successful quite quickly in standup is because all of those things that Dennis and Keith (at Loose Moose) taught – it was a constant thing all the time. Don't go for the funny – go for the truth, go for the story and try to relate."

As such, Fairbairn's act mostly concerns stories from her life – from tense personal relationships to kids.

"It's mostly about my kids and failing. Failing as a parent. A constant, never ending failure as a parent," she laughed.

Her former mentor Ken Gardner will open the show for her.

Fairbairn takes the Loose Moose stage on Jan. 5 at 8 p.m.

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Two children were barred from enrolling in elementary school.
DAVID P. BALL/METRO

School won't teach kids of immigrants

EDUCATION

Children had to leave, despite being Canadian citizens

David P. Ball
Metro | Vancouver

"Where kids reach for the stars."

That's the motto emblazoned above the entrance of North Otter Elementary School, surrounded by snow-glistening fields in Langley, B.C. east of Vancouver.

But for a five- and seven-year-old living just minutes away, that motto appears not to apply.

Despite the fact that both the five- and seven-year old were born in Canada — and are therefore Canadian citizens — the local school district won't let them enrol because of their Mexican parents' paperwork troubles.

The federal government offered the mother and children visitor visas so they could enrol by a Sept. 30 deadline, while their father continues his paperwork in Mexico to resume his 10-year employment at Hastings Racecourse.

"I sent all the papers, I never lied. They asked me for my status, and I sent my visa," explained their mother, a 30-year-old optometry student from Mexico City, whom Metro agreed not identify because of their precarious immigration process. "They were really excited to be at school — the principal was so nice and took to kids to their classrooms. But after only a couple hours, they called and told us to pick them up: 'Your kids cannot be here.'"

It turned out they were neither registered for classes, nor covered by the school's insurance, a staffer explained.

"They asked us, 'Mom, why are you picking us up early?" she recalled, sobbing apologetically.

According to a provincial Ministry of Education — which couldn't discuss "details" — "eligibility for free public education is based on residence rather than citizenship or immigration status," said a spokesman.

METRO TEMPERATURE CHECK

Winter is here, and if there's anything that unites us as Canadians, it's our shared joys and sorrows brought on by the cold, white, fluffy stuff. If you think you're having a bad winter right now, just remember this: You're not alone. Here is a round up of winter weather across other Metro cities on Sunday. Toronto, Calgary, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver are relishing their snow days, while Halifax and Ottawa are expecting snowfall on Monday. METRO

Halifax	Ottawa	Toronto	Winnipeg	Edmonton	Calgary	Vancouver
-7C	-6C	-1C	-19C	-18C	-17C	-4C

IMMIGRATION

Challenges remain for refugees a year later

Noura Alissa says she's very grateful for the warm welcome she's received in Canada, but admits the year since she arrived in Montreal from Syria has been more difficult than she expected.

"Trying to find a job while learning French has been difficult, but I am trying," the 25-year-old Syrian refugee said in English in an interview Sunday. She said the warm welcome she's received from Canadians has helped ease the transition.

It has been a year since Canada welcomed the first group of Syrians that the government flew out of refugee camps, and both political leaders and refugees marked the occasion over the weekend with a mixture of pride and an acknowledgment of the challenges that remain.

Immigration Minister John McCallum said he would never forget joining Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and other cabinet ministers at Toronto's Pearson airport on Dec. 10, 2015 to greet the first plane load of refugees.

"At a time when many countries closed their doors to refugees, we in Canada said 'come on in, you're welcome,'" he said at an event in Montreal on Sunday to mark the anniversary.

Prime Minister Trudeau also noted the anniversary on Twitter over the weekend and federal Health Minister Jane Philpott, who also joined Trudeau in welcoming the first plane load, noted the fond memories she had of that night in a tweet posted Saturday.

McCallum and other political leaders at the Montreal event acknowledged there are still challenges to face.

Despite the arrival of more than 36,000 refugees since Nov. 2015, he noted many newcomers were still waiting to be reunited with their families.

"You cannot compare the life in a peaceful country with life where there is war," said George Kas Barsoum. "This country is peaceful, this country is welcoming, it is very, very good." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Sentencing regime touted

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Indigenous prison numbers addressed in federal study

A separate system for sentencing aboriginal offenders might be the key to dealing with the disproportionate number of indigenous people behind bars, suggests a federally-commissioned study.

A standalone code for meting out penalties to indigenous offenders could flow from a newly created national sentencing commission with a mandate to issue legally-binding guidelines, says the research study prepared for Justice Canada.

Given the failure of past attempts to address the swelling number of incarcerated indigenous people, "a more radical approach is clearly necessary" — especially in light of the federal Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to eliminate over-representation over the next decade, says the study.

The Access to Information law was recently used to obtain a draft version of the August 2015 study, Sentencing Reform: Lessons from Foreign Jurisdictions and Options for Canada. It was written by Julian Roberts, a criminology professor at the University of Oxford in England and a member of the Sentencing Council of England and Wales.

Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould was asked by the Prime Minister to review changes to the criminal justice system over the last decade with an eye to ensuring safety of communities, getting value for public money and reducing the rate of incarceration of indigenous Canadians.
FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **A guideline system may be the only way.**
> Federal report excerpt

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has asked Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould to review changes to the criminal justice system over the last decade with an eye to ensuring safety of communities, getting value for public money and filling any gaps.

Among the primary goals: reduce the rate of incarceration of indigenous Canadians.

The federal auditor general recently noted that while indigenous people make up about three per cent of Canada's adult population, indigenous offenders accounted for 26 per cent of all people in federal custody in 2015-16.

Roberts cites additional problems with Canadian sentencing, including overreliance on custody relative to other western nations, variation in sentencing outcomes, limited guidance on the role and use of victim impact statements, lack of gender-specific considerations, and increased tension between the legislature and judiciary as a result of recent mandatory sentencing provisions.

A spokeswoman for Wilson-Raybould said while the minister is consulting widely on possible reforms, she has no position at the moment on the need for a sentencing commission. THE CANADIAN PRESS

SEX OFFENCES UNIT

Mountie exposed to child porn sues

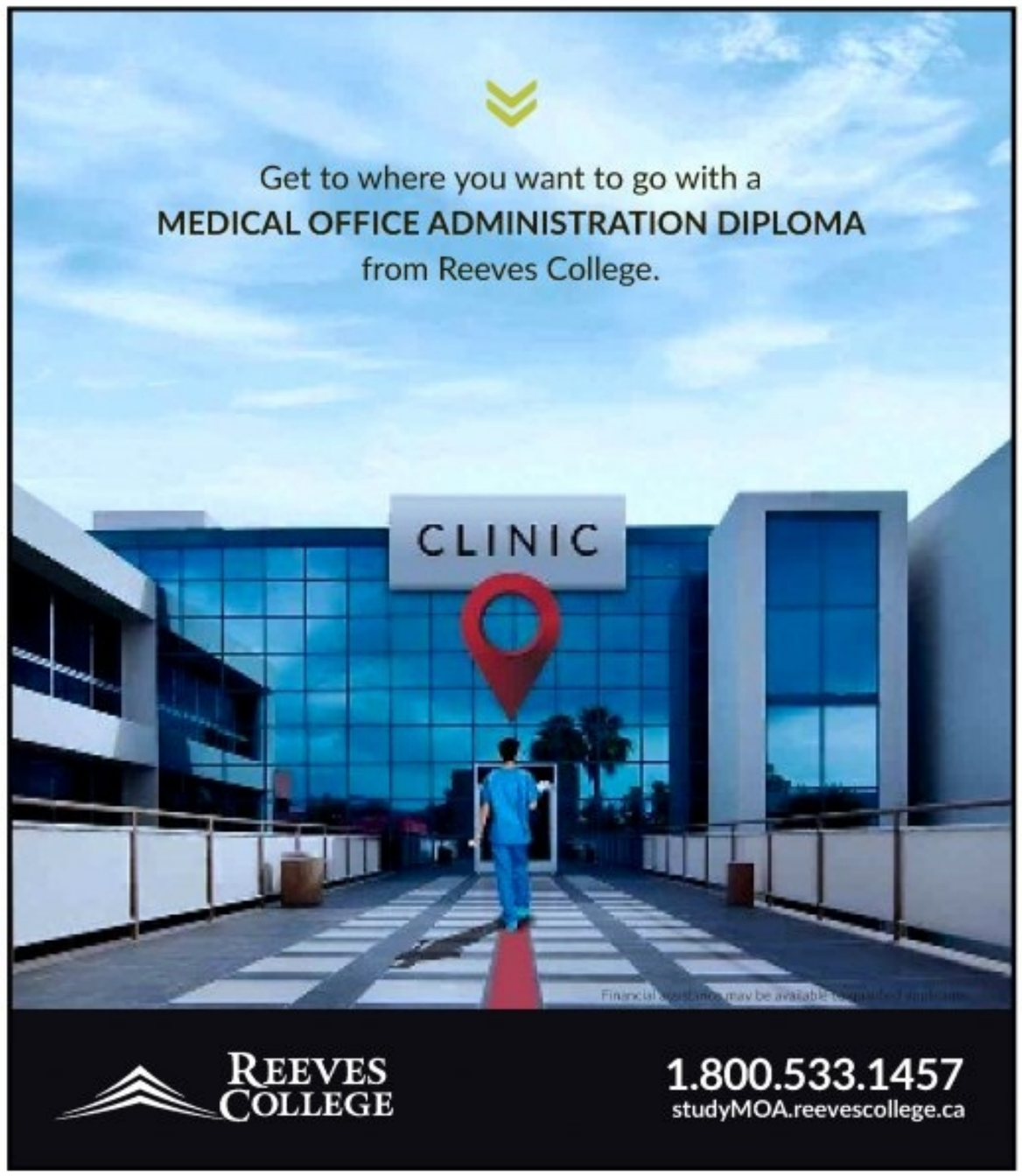
An RCMP officer has filed a lawsuit alleging he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder after being exposed to a "significant volume" of child pornography while working in a specialized unit.

Const. Michael Wardrope says he was exposed to disturbing videos, photographs, interviews and interrogations as a member of the child abuse and sexual offence unit in Surrey, B.C.

Wardrope says in the court document he was "flattered" when he was recruited to the unit in 2009. But he says he told his bosses he had three young children, had to commute hours per day and didn't think viewing child porn would be healthy.

By fall 2010, the lawsuit says, Wardrope was showing symptoms of having a nervous breakdown. The supervisor promised to transfer him out of the unit but the transfer didn't happen until 10 months later.

None of the allegations has been tested in court.
THE CANADIAN PRESS



Trump shuns briefings on intelligence

POLITICS

President-elect also said Russian hacking claims are 'ridiculous'

Donald Trump on Sunday called a recent CIA assessment of Russian hacking "ridiculous" and says he's not interested in getting daily intelligence briefings — an unprecedented public dismissal by a president-elect of the nation's massive and sophisticated intelligence apparatus.

Trump's remarks come as key congressional Republicans joined Democrats in demanding a bipartisan investigation into the Kremlin's activities and questioned consideration of Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson - who has close business ties with Moscow — as head of the State Department.

Asked whether he's rejecting valuable intelligence on Fox News Sunday, Trump was defiant.

"I get it when I need it," he said of the top-secret briefings sessions, adding that he's leaving it up to the briefers to decide when a development represents a "change" big enough to notify him.

"I'm, like, a smart person. I don't have to be told the same thing in the same words every single day for the next eight years," Trump said.

The CIA has concluded with "high confidence" that Russia sought to influence the U.S. election on behalf of Trump. The finding alarmed lawmakers, including Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain who said Sunday he planned to put Sen. Lindsay Graham, a staunch Trump critic, in charge of investigating the claim.

McCain also has questions about Tillerson's business relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin, although it's not clear Tillerson will be nominated. Sunday afternoon, Tillerson had still not been formally offered the job, according to a person with knowledge of the process who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Exxon steadily expanded its Russian business on Tillerson's watch even as its rivals faced expropriation and regulatory obstacles. In 2013, Putin bestowed the Order of Friendship on Tillerson.

"Maybe those ties are strictly commercial and got to do with his business in the oil business. Fine," McCain told CBS "Face the Nation." And "we'll give him a fair hearing. But is it a matter of concern? Certainly it should be a matter of concern."

"Being a 'friend of Vladimir' is not an attribute I am hoping for from a #SecretaryOfState," tweeted Florida Republican Sen. Marco Rubio, Trump's former campaign rival and a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Pennsylvania Democratic Sen. Bob Casey said the developments "raise serious questions about whether the incoming administration will adequately stand up to Russia's aggression."

Trump said Tillerson's relationship with Moscow was a selling point.

Later Sunday, he Trump tweeted: "Whether I choose him or not for 'State'- Rex Tillerson, the Chairman & CEO of ExxonMobil, is a world class player and dealmaker. Stay tuned!"

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATTACKS A DAY OF MOURNING People carry the coffins of bomb victims during a memorial on Sunday for police officers killed outside the Besiktas football club stadium Vodafone Arena in Istanbul, Turkey. Family members, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, ministers and colleagues attended the memorial as Turkey declared a national day of mourning after twin blasts on Saturday killed dozens of people and wounded many others near a soccer stadium. Turkish authorities have banned distribution of images relating to the Istanbul explosions within Turkey. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dozens killed in Egypt cathedral bombing

A bombing at a chapel adjacent to Egypt's main Coptic Christian cathedral killed 25 people and wounded another 49 during Sunday Mass, one of the deadliest attacks carried out against the religious minority in recent memory and a grim reminder of Egypt's difficult struggle to restore security and stability after nearly six years of turmoil.

The attack came two days after a bomb elsewhere in Cairo killed six policemen, an assault claimed by a shadowy group that authorities say is linked to the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood. That group — called "Hasm," or "Decisiveness" — distanced itself from the attack in a statement issued Sunday night, saying it does not as a principle kill women, children, the elderly or worshippers.

A damaged bench inside the St. Mark Cathedral in Cairo following Sunday's bombing. NARIMAN EL-MOFTY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Sunday's attack. However, Daesh targeted Christians in the past, including a New Year's Day bombing at a church in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria in 2011 that killed at least 21 people. More recently, churches and Christian property in southern Egypt were targeted in the aftermath of the military's July 2013 ouster of an Islamist president. Those were blamed on Brotherhood supporters and ultraorthodox Salafi Muslims.

Regardless of who is behind the bombing, the attack was likely to deal a setback to Egypt's struggle to regain normalcy and revive its ailing economy. Moreover, the attacks this past week were almost certain to undermine the modest recovery made in recent months by the vital tourism sector.

Egyptian state TV and the Health Ministry put the casualty toll at 25 dead and 49 wounded.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Italy's foreign minister tapped to be premier

Italian Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni was tapped Sunday to form a new, government and end a political crisis so the country can tackle pressing problems.

"I'm aware of the urgency to give Italy a government in the fullness of its powers, to reassure the citizens and to face with utmost commitment and determination international, economic and social priorities," Gentiloni said Sunday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bill English THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

New Zealand chooses a new prime minister

The conservative caucus in New Zealand's Parliament has chosen Bill English to be the next prime minister.

English emerged victorious Monday following a meeting of the National Party caucus. Two other candidates for the job withdrew last week after English gained more support. He is to be officially sworn in later Monday.

His ascension from deputy prime minister follows the surprise resignation last week of John Key after eight years as prime minister.

Key was a popular leader and was expected to contest a fourth straight election next year.

But he said he wanted to leave while he was on top and to spend more time with his wife and two children.

The 54-year-old English is a former farmer and practicing Roman Catholic who has degrees in commerce and literature.

Under English, New Zealand has been enjoying relatively robust annual GDP growth of more than three per cent and the unemployment rate has fallen below five per cent.

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Another 4,000 flee fighting

SYRIA

Rebels' hold over Aleppo continues to shrink

Hundreds of Syrians stood in long lines Sunday, some getting on government buses, to flee the shrinking rebel-held enclave of eastern Aleppo, as military troops and allied militias continued their push to regain full control of the opposition stronghold.

Syria's state news agency said at least 4,000 people fled the enclave Sunday. The state TV channel said more than 70,000 of eastern Aleppo's estimated 275,000 residents have fled recently — mostly to government-held western Aleppo districts.

Residents said government airstrikes hit the last remaining bridge that linked eastern and western Aleppo, a largely symbolic strike. They also reported that government and allied troops kept up their bombing of a handful of neighbourhoods, which have become the shelter for most of the civilians who chose to remain.

Syrian pro-government forces hold Syrian flags bearing the portrait of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad as they patrol Aleppo's Bab al-Nairab neighbourhood on December 10. GEORGE OURFALIAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

"There is not a building that remains standing," said Mohammed Khandaqani, a medical administrator who remains in Aleppo, speaking of his neighbourhood, al-Maadi, near the old city. He said government troops have advanced there, and others said most of the newly displaced residents left from that area. "This scorched earth policy is truly overwhelming."

State TV on Sunday showed hundreds of Syrian men gathering, apparently to leave eastern Aleppo while some women were getting on the buses. The images from the exit routes, which have also been broadcast live by the Russian military, have been playing nearly every day since the ground offensive began dislodging opposition fighters bit by bit from eastern Aleppo neighbourhood starting from the north.

> **There is not a building that remains standing.**
> Mohammed Khandaqani

The swift Russia-backed ground offensive, which began on Nov. 26, followed an intensive aerial bombing campaign that knocked out most of the medical facilities, targeted civil defence and municipal vehicles and blocked roads with rubble. The eastern Aleppo area has also been cut off from outside assistance since July by a government siege.

A state TV broadcaster said insurgents still control around 7 square kilometres (4 square miles) in the city's east, down from the original 45 square kilometres (17 square miles) they once held.

Rebels captured the eastern half of Aleppo, Syria's largest city and former commercial capital, in 2012. The government's recapture of the city would mark its greatest victory since the war began in 2011.

Brig. Gen. Zeid al-Saleh, the head of the security committee in Aleppo city, told state TV channel al-Ikhbariya that Syrian forces, "are working to settle the battle with (the opposition) soon."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NIGERIA

Rushed construction caused church to collapse: Members

Mortuaries overflowed with bodies Sunday from a church collapse in southern Nigeria that killed at least 160 people, and worshippers said construction of the building had been rushed.

Hundreds were inside the Reigners Bible Church International Uyo, Nigeria on Saturday for the consecration of founder Akan Weeks as its bishop when the metal girders fell and the corrugated iron roof caved in.

Screaming survivors streamed out amid cries from those inside.

"There were trapped bodies, parts of bodies, blood all over the place and people's handbags and shoes scattered," said computer analyst Ukeme Eyibio. Officials feared the death toll could rise.

Weeks and Akwa Ibom state Gov. Udom Emmanuel were among the survivors.

Eyibio had parked his car outside the complex to make a phone call when he heard a deafening crash and saw that the church had disappeared.

He and three others dragged 10 injured people from an overflow area for worshippers just outside the collapsed church. They did not enter the main structure because a construction worker warned it was not safe.

Workers had been rushing to finish the still-under-construction church in time for Saturday's ceremony, congregants said. The governor's spokesman, Ekerete Udoh, said the state government will investigate if any building standards were compromised.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

POLICE CASES

Jurors side with officers

Facing uphill battles to find jurors willing to convict police officers, prosecutors say they will try again to win guilty verdicts against white officers in the fatal shootings of black men Sam DuBose and Walter Scott.

Legal experts say the mistrials show the difficulties prosecutors face in police cases. Many jurors are unwilling to second-guess officers' reactions when they claim to be in danger.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Winter retailers' joy on ice

WEATHER

Stores not yet celebrating the return of snow, cold temps

A year after warm weather curtailed their Christmas cheer, Canadian winter sport vehicle and apparel retailers aren't ready to pop the champagne despite a forecasted return to seasonally cold temperatures.

Following two challenging winters, retailers are cautious after enduring another late start to the season.

"We could have the mother of all winters from here to the finish line, which would be wonderful for everyone, but the reality is that this is the third winter that's deviating from the statistical norm of what winter is," said Jeff Crook, chief product officer for sporting goods for Mountain Equipment Co-op.

Besides weather, he said the winter retail season is experiencing a "revolution" amid economic uncertainty, new competitors and the growth of online sales.

"We do think that there is a fundamental change in the game of winter sales in Canada," he added from Vancouver.

After "getting kicked in the teeth" over the last two seasons, Crook said MEC has curtailed purchases of discretionary fashion outerwear as it tries to preserve profits despite being forced to offer deep discounts.

Winter boots displayed at The Bay in Toronto, Ont. in November 2015. Following two challenging winters, retailers are cautious after enduring another late start to the season. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

When you have snow at this time in December it's like waking up the customer.
Jose Boisjoli

A specialist on how weather affects North American businesses says that some retailers were gun shy about buying too much stock a year after enduring the warmest and driest November and December in more than 55 years.

After seeing sales of boots fall about 10 per cent last year, the president of Quebec-based chain Yellow Shoes has already seen a lift in sales of the product.

"For us it's been a much better year than it was last year," said Yellow Shoes president Douglas Avrith.

However, the entrepreneur warned the 100-year-old retailer will be offering fewer big markdowns after better controlling its inventory and purchasing more fashion boots rather than heavy felt-lined footwear.

Le Chateau says weather fluctuations aren't "a big deal" for the fashion business even though they affect sales of coats and boots.

The growth of online sales is diminishing the impact of extreme weather by allowing shoppers to buy even if snow and cold keeps them away from stores, said Franco Rocchi, senior vice president of sales and operations.

"I think it's too early to celebrate but they're in a good mood," CEO Jose Boisjoli said in an interview.

Without cold and snow, customers tend to delay purchases and even skip a year to upgrade their rides, Boisjoli said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

KEYSTONE XL

Pipeline news on the way: Trump

Donald Trump has suggested he'll move quickly on Keystone XL after taking office, with the incoming president expected to reverse his predecessor's ban on the Alberta-to-Texas oil pipeline.

It was just one remark on a news-filled weekend replete with stories about election-tampering from Russia, potential major changes to U.S. policy on China, fights over cabinet picks and the U.S. Congress passing a law that could reduce congestion at the Canada-U.S. border.

Trump brought up the pipeline himself during the interview with Fox News Sunday, while being pressed on whether his fossil-fuel-friendly administration would remain in the Paris climate agreement.

Trump said he would make a decision soon on Paris — then raised the pipeline.

"The Keystone pipeline, you're going to have a decision fairly quickly," Trump said.

"And you'll see that."

It's little surprise that Trump would favour the project — it was part of his platform. He's also reportedly considering naming Rex Tillerson, CEO of Exxon Mobil, as his secretary of state. The move would put him in charge of the file.

But that's not the main reason his rumoured appointment drew so much controversy over the weekend. The source of that consternation was Tillerson's years-long personal relationship with Russian leader Vladimir Putin. THE CANADIAN PRESS

ENERGY

PM reaches carbon deal with majority of provinces

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced Friday that his government and the majority of Canada's provinces had come to an agreement on a national carbon pricing plan.

Trudeau has been working on a national carbon pricing plan for months amid worries about the U.S. heading in the opposite direction and how that could put Canadian companies at an economic disadvantage. Earlier, outgoing U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden urged Canadian leaders to continue to treat efforts to combat climate change urgently despite the incoming administration of Donald Trump.

Trudeau called the framework agreement on a carbon tax historic. But Canada's 10 provincial leaders are not unanimous in agreeing to Trudeau's carbon tax.

Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall has refused to agree to the tax; Manitoba's premier said he hasn't signed on yet because it wants more money for health care; and British Columbia Premier Christy Clark balked at first before reaching a compromise.

"The new Trump administration, most assuredly, will not be implementing a carbon tax," Wall said.

Biden told Trudeau and the premiers that whatever uncertainty exists surrounding Trump's policies, he is confident America will continue on towards a low-carbon future.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PC Alberta

Notice of Delegate Selection Meeting for PCAA Leadership

CALGARY-GLENMORE PC ASSOCIATION

Tuesday, January 10, 2017

Date: Tuesday, January 10, 2017
Time: 7 p.m. (Registration opens at 6:30pm)
Location: Haysboro Community Association Hall
1204 – 89 Avenue SW, Calgary

If interested in becoming a delegate for the upcoming leadership convention in Calgary, Alberta on March 17-19, 2017 please send a notice of interest to Dianne Cooper-Ponte at dcooperponte@gmail.com by noon on January 3, 2017.

Delegate nominees and voters must attend the meeting in person, meet all eligibility requirements and hold a membership by at least 11:59pm on December 26, 2016 in order to be a delegate or vote.

www.pcalberta.org has more details

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Monday, December 12, 2016

URBAN ETIQUETTE ELLEN VANSTONE

THE QUESTION

How does one account for income disparity among groups of friends?

©Ani Castillo

Dear Ellen,

How do I politely tell my friends I can't afford to hang out with them? At university, it wasn't a problem, but now I feel like they must have family money I never knew about or they're earning a ton more than me. But somehow they can afford expensive dinners out, and now they all want to go to Cuba for a long weekend. I just don't have that kind of money. How do I beg off without appearing rude or uninterested in my old gang?

MM

Dear Ellen,

Every time I go for lunch with my gal pals, there's a problem with the bill. There's always one person who insists we pay separately, and then calculates what everyone had down to the last penny. I say we should just take turns picking up the whole tab. Who's right?

SC

Dear MM and SC,

It's funny how people these days will reveal every gory detail of their physical health, relationship issues and sex lives while personal finances remain strictly off limits.

I've been in MM's position — shocked at how rich some of my friends seemed compared to me. And horribly self-conscious about my own lack of funds (and expensive clothes, car, home, etc.). Then, one day, while they were urging me to come along to their next hiking trip in Europe, I suddenly found myself telling the truth instead of lying about work obligations: "That sounds like fun, but I can't afford it."

It's funny how people will reveal every detail of their physical health and sex lives while personal finances remain off limits.

The world didn't end. They didn't seem to think less of me. The reaction was basically, "Oh, that sucks," and the conversation carried on. In subsequent gatherings, I detected a politeness on their part in not talking too much about the European expedition in case I felt excluded. But neither did they make their trip a secret, which would have made me feel even more excluded. In short, they behaved with perfect manners, were sensitive to my situation, and ultimately treated the whole issue the way it should be treated between friends — as not a big deal.

With SC's restaurant-bill problem, I wonder if it's another case of economic disparity. The nitpicker who insists on forensic accounting at the end of the meal may have carefully ordered only a salad because she's on a budget and can't afford to split a bill that includes everyone else's sea bass and champagne. Or maybe she really is a cheapskate with deep-seated neuroses about how money represents the love she never received as a child.

Either way, you as her friend should swallow your irritation and go along with it. And if you do insist on picking up the whole tab to avoid the nickel and diming, feel free. But remember it's your choice, and no one owes you anything next time you lunch with the ladies.

Need advice?
Email Ellen:
scene@metronews.ca

VICKY MOCHAMA

Viola Desmond's face is small comfort for the economically deprived

The decision to put Viola Desmond on the $10 bill is a landmark win for black people and communities of colour in Canada.

But there is no symbolic win powerful enough to justify how racism affected her life and robbed her of her many successes.

Despite being a businesswoman at the heart of Halifax's black entrepreneurial class, the trial against her ultimately broke her. She died in poverty.

It's in this way that racism robs families and communities for generations.

Racism is an economic interest that levies a fine on otherness and punishes those who will not accept the fine. Canada's government, lawmakers and leaders, have been the enforcers and beneficiaries.

Viola Desmond experienced this viscerally when she was arrested, jailed and fined for refusing to sit in the Rose Theatre's balcony, which was designated for its black patrons. Her failure, by way of the quotidian act of buying a movie ticket, to acknowledge the racial hierarchy required swift punishment.

Through the police and in the courts, the force of the state was brought in judgment of her blackness. She was fined $26 for "defrauding" the province of its one-cent amusement tax. Six of those dollars were given to the theatre manager. The oppressor was given a bounty for enforcing white supremacy. Inequality of choice was thus compounded.

Some say Desmond's place on the $10 bill is, at worst, a revision of history, and, at best, an attempt to sweep the uglier parts of our history aside. It's a specious argument that suggests history is being taught via the medium of our plastic currency. (The symbols on our currency currently include an icebreaker, which replaced the Famous Five, who I would argue were far more groundbreaking than a boat.)

When it comes to money, the ongoing legacy of racism is to deprive communities of colour. According to research by economist Krishna Pendakur, a visible minority man born in Canada earns about 18 per cent less than his Canadian-born white male counterpart. Indigenous Canadians live in a poverty so vast and crushing that it has been called a human-rights crisis.

A 2011 report on Canada's Colour Coded Labour Market found that poverty rates are three times higher for racialized families. That report also highlights that in 2006, the year of the last longform census, racialized Canadians were earning 81.4 cents to every dollar that non-racialized Canadians made.

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metro LIFE

Your essential daily news

Monday, December 12, 2016

Al Gore's climate change doc An Inconvenient Truth getting a sequel

Knock their socks off

Holiday Ideas

There's a meme of the Grinch as a kid frowning after getting socks for Christmas. That same Grinch as an adult is all smiles when he gets another set. It was likely a pair of Merino wool socks that changed his mind — a cultish following has developed for the super-soft footwear among normcore and athleisure devotees in recent years. Be warned: Merino wool socks that look cool while keeping your feet warm usually cost between $25-35 per pair. Here are a few of our top picks. **MELISSA DUNNE/FOR METRO**

1 Wigwam

Wigam Mills, Inc. is a family-run business that's been making socks since 1905 in Wisconsin. The 'Miley' sock is made of merino wool, stretch nylon, and spandex. This striped pair won't sing you bouncy songs á la its namesake, Miley Cyrus, but they will keep your tootsies looking sassy.
$18 (U.S.); wigwam.com.

2 Icebreakers

Many of New Zealand's Merino wool products end up being sent to us shivering Canadians this time of year. Icebreaker socks are among those products. These pretty pink socks, made of Merino wool, nylon, and lycra, will keep your toes warm while ensuring that you look hawt.
$34.99; icebreaker.com

3 Darn Tough

This is the perfect pair of socks for the patriot in your life. The O Canada sock is made of Merino wool, lycra, and nylon. Darn Tough has been making its socks in Vermont for almost four decades. This pair will serve any Canadian darn well, whether during a game of shinny, or at the pub after the game.
$33; sportinglife.ca

4 Smartwool

Smartwool was started by two ski instructors in 1999. Since then, its socks have developed a devoted fan base. These smart, snowflake-adorned socks, made of a mix of Merino wool, nylon, and elastane, actually keep feet warm. Whether hitting the slopes, the sidewalk, or the subway, these socks are the gift that keeps on giving all winter long.
$29.99; sportchek.ca

5 L.L. Bean

The receiver of these L.L. Bean socks will surely be head over heels for them. The socks are made in Maine specifically for skiing and snowboarding. This pair features a mix of Primaloft acrylic, Merino wool, nylon, polyester, and spandex, and they also come with the classic clothier's famous lifetime guarantee.
$24.95 (U.S.); llbean.com

SAVING

Stocking up for a celebration doesn't need to hurt the wallet

How to spend less on your winter booze

ISTOCK

For many, nothing rings in the festive season like a smooth single-malt whisky or a warming glass of your favourite red wine enjoyed in the company of good friends.

But with so many social obligations over December, entertaining with and gifting such potent potables can add up, says Adam McDowell, author of Drinks: A User's Guide. To keep your budget within reason, McDowell recommends embracing the spirit of Scrooge when it comes to sleuthing out a great bargain.

"I'm the last person to say you need to spend a lot of money to get delicious wine, and if you're hosting you maybe want to be a little bit of a cheapskate," he says.

Craft beer is another affordable option in which there's a diverse range of unique seasonal products, adds Crystal Luxmore, a certified beer sommelier in Toronto. Here's some tips for buying — and imbibing — in moderation.

Best wines under $15

If you're stocking up for a celebration, McDowell counsels steering clear of high-end wines.

"It's not like your friends are going to be able to appreciate the good stuff later into the night," he says. "So a party is a good occasion to find that $10 or $15 gem and get a whole bunch of that."

His favourite inexpensive go-tos come from Mediterranean countries like France, Greece and Italy.

"In these countries where people drink wine more or less every day, it creates a situation where affordability happens at the same point as quality," he says. "What you get in Canada is a lot of $15 wine from those regions that are spectacular."

When it comes to reds some of McDowell's favourites are Gamay Noirs from France or virtually anything from Spain.

As for whites, he's a big fan of products that come from the Douro region of Portugal.

Not your average beer run

For those who don't consider beer a particularly festive drink, Luxmore says there's a number of specialty brews available called "winter warmers" that might change your mind. Think spiced or fruity ales with Christmas flavours, she says, "almost fruitcake in a glass."

Bourbon barrel-aged beers are another seasonal pick that may appeal to the whisky lover on your Christmas list, she adds.

"At this time of year we get these big boozy bottles that have been sitting in used barrels for 12 months, so they soak up all of that oak and vanilla and toasted character," she says.

For such specialty beers expect to pay up to $10 or $15 for a 500 ml or 750 ml bottle.

But if that sounds expensive, Luxmore says, keep in mind that's basically top-shelf product. "So not only are you not cheaping out, you're getting the high-end stuff," she says.

Other beers sure to impress over the holidays are Belgian tripels or saisons, Luxmore says. These golden beers have a cork, "so they'll pop just like champagne."

Buying the bottom shelf

If you're planning a party the same rules apply to spirits as they do with wine, says McDowell. In other words, "don't spend more than you have to."

Whether you're buying vodka, bourbon or scotch, he says, "almost anything you can grab for $25 is great stuff for mix."

Generally, he adds, any brand of gin or Canadian whisky will be of high quality regardless of the sticker price. When it comes to those types of spirits, he says, "the only thing we have in Canada are premium brands."

But if you're not much for liquor, McDowell says, don't bother stocking up your bar. Instead, create a signature cocktail.

"Make a big pitcher of something that's not too boozy, which is great if you want to keep your guests upright and cheerful," he says. "Plus, it's also not as expensive." THE CANADIAN PRESS

TAXATION

Time to clock up the credits

Tax planning may be the last thing on Canadians' minds as they get ready for the hustle and bustle of the holiday season.

But now is the time to take advantage of credits and benefits available to you until Dec. 31, says Jamie Golombek, managing director of tax and estate planning at CIBC Private Wealth Management. Otherwise, you may be leaving money on the table that you won't be able to claim in the new year.

"Most of the planning has to be done in the tax year that you're in," Golombek notes.

Keep in mind that, while some new personal tax credits have been introduced this year, others are being eliminated, adds Karin Mizgala, a certified financial planner and co-founder of Money Coaches Canada.

Here are four tax-savings strategies to consider before the clock winds down on 2016.

Maximize medical expenses

While medical expenses must be paid by Dec. 31 to a claim a tax credit for 2016, the related good or service doesn't have always need to be acquired in the same year, according to Golombek.

He says this provides an opportunity to prepay certain items for 2017 and claim them for 2016 if it enables you to exceed the minimum threshold required to qualify for a tax benefit.

$2,237

A tax credit can be claimed when total medical expenses exceed the lower of three per cent of your net income or $2,237 in 2016.

"An example I often give is if a child needs braces or orthodontist work," he says. "You might be able to get a medical expense credit right away for the amount paid this year, even if this is something that may be ongoing for the next number of months into the new year."

Don't delay charitable donations

If you're thinking of making a charitable gift in the near future, be sure to do it before the end of the year so that you'll get a donation credit right away to reduce your 2016 taxes.

"If you wait until even Jan. 1 you're going to wait for a year if not longer before you'll see the benefit of the donation credit," Mizgala says.

Both the federal and provincial governments offer donation tax credits that, in combination, can result in tax savings of up to 50 per cent of the value of your gift in 2016, adds Golombek.

Pre-pay children's arts and fitness activities

Ottawa is phasing out both of the children's arts and fitness tax credits this year, meaning you only have until Dec. 31 to take save up to $250 of expenses on artistic or cultural activities and up to $500 of expenses on physical activity programs.

"So if someone is not spending enough money in 2016 to maximize those credits maybe they could prepay some of those expenses for 2017," says Golombek.

"Let's say your kids are taking swimming lessons in January: You could you register now for the January semester, get that credit and use that if you're not already maxed out."

Renovate for home accessibility

Introduced this year is the home accessibility tax credit to help seniors and people with disabilities with the cost of home renovations designed to make life simpler and safer.

The tax credit is equal to 15 per cent of expenses for those spending up to $10,000 per year on things like wheelchair ramps and walk-in bathtubs, says Mizgala. THE CANADIAN PRESS

There is a fair way to split the bills

Rather than a 50/50 split, divvying up the proportionate shares of bills is fairer for both members of a couple, leaving money in each pocket for individual goals. ISTOCK

ADVICE

Higher income earner should shell out more for expenses

Gail Vaz-Oxlade
For Metro Canada

Whether you're planning to live with a mate or officially tie the knot, it's a good idea to have a chat about how you'll manage your incomes as a couple.

While many people just split everything 50/50, I believe a proportionate splitting of joint expenses is fairer.

Let's take the example of Chris and Alex. Alex makes $65,000 a year, and Chris makes $40,000 a year.

Splitting the bills 50/50 would mean that Chris ends up spending disproportionately more income on joint expenses, leaving little or nothing for individual goals such as savings or travel.

That's why a proportionate split is far fairer; it leaves money in each pocket for savings, managing individual expenses and having a life.

Use net numbers for this calculation. Since a higher income earner will pay more in taxes, using gross numbers isn't fair. So start with how much you each bring home a month — the money that actually goes into the bank account. So that $65,000 gross turns into $52,000 after taxes, or $4,333 per month, and that $40,000 gross turns into $34,000 after taxes, or $2,833 per month.

The first step is to add your net incomes together. Then divide each individual income by this figure and multiply by 100.

When Alex and Chris add their monthly incomes together they get $4,333 + $2,833 = $7,166.

Time to divide Chris's income by that $7,166 and then multiply by 100 to get a percentage: $2,833 ÷ 7,166 x 100 = 39.53 per cent, which will round nicely to 40 per cent. Which means that Alex will pay 60 per cent of the expenses.

Since Alex and Chris are paying $2,700 a month in rent, they would each contribute the following to their joint account to cover their rent costs:

Alex: $2,700 x 60 per cent = $1,620, or 37 per cent of net income.

It's important that partners also talk about what they'll do if there's a change in circumstances.

Chris: $2,700 x 40 per cent = $1,080, or 38 per cent of net income.

See how nicely that works out?

This, of course, only applies to the bills you agree to split. If you've run up a whole bunch of debt that your mate doesn't want to have anything to do with, then you're on your own. The same goes for individual expenses. If Alex chooses to drive a fancy car that costs $600 a month and Chris chooses a car that costs $200 a month, they would each pay their own car costs.

It is important that partners also talk about what they'll do if there's a change in circumstances that affects the budget.

One of you may be out of work temporarily. How will you even up after? And if you decide to have a family and one of you stays home, even in the short term, how will you manage the bills and ensure the non-working partner has some money of their own?

These discussions may feel hard; people find it difficult to talk about money. But not talking will leave you both in the dark, a place where resentment thrives.

So communicate, don't disintegrate.

For more money advice, visit Gail's website at gailvazoxlade.com

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Yawning: the yoga move you should be practising

THE MOVES

Learning to yawn better helps with breathing and movement

YuMee Chung
Torstar News Service

Long before you took your first yoga class, your body already knew something about co-ordinating breath and movement, thanks to the mechanism of yawning. We humans start practising this nascent form of yoga in utero, yet we are taught from an early age to suppress our yawns for fear of causing offence.

We explored the simple pleasures of yawning inside the Single Breath exhibit at the Ontario Science Centre's AstraZeneca Human Edge.

Try Full Body Yawns to ventilate your lungs, stretch your body, and restore balance to the autonomic nervous system.

1. Stand with relaxed posture — unlatch the belly, mellow out the pelvic floor, and unburden your shoulders.
2. Hang the lower jaw open and allow the breath to flow in and out through your mouth.
3. Pretend you've been cast as the lead yawner in a movie and fake a few really big yawns: try curling your hands into fists, shrugging the shoulders, and tightening up all your muscles as you take a few staccato inhales through the mouth, then splay your fingers as you reach your arms out in any and all directions.
4. Have fun with the sounds of yawning whether they are high and squeaky or low and guttural. Let the sounds surprise and delight you.
5. Give yourself permission to yawn for five minutes without covering your mouth or feeling the least bit apologetic.
6. It is perfectly normal for your eyes and nose to get moist. Blow your nose as often as you need to.

YuMee Chung is a recovering lawyer who teaches yoga in Toronto. She is on the faculty of several yoga teacher training programs and leads international yoga retreats. Learn more about her at padmani.com.

AN OPEN MYSTERY: WHY WE YAWN

Modern science is still working to unravel the mystery behind the yawn. For now, here's what we do know:

- All vertebrates yawn. Fetuses yawn as many as six times an hour in their second and third trimesters.
- Yawns are contagious. Dogs will yawn with their human companions but psychopaths appear to lack the empathy to catch yawns from others.
- The body movements that accompany yawns are called pandiculations. Pandiculations are different from stretching in that they involve a voluntary muscular contraction followed by a slow lengthening and complete relaxation. Animals yawn and pandiculate a number of times upon waking.
- Yawning causes our eyes to water and noses to run. Think of yawning as nature's eye drops and neti pot.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

To maximize your yawn, like the lion in Frankfurt zoo (top), stand with relaxed posture — unlatch the belly, mellow out the pelvic floor, and unburden your shoulders (above).
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE/MARCUS OLENIUK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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YOU CAN DO THIS BRICKLAYER

Building a future, breaking barriers

WHY I LIKE MY JOB

Jenna Lipinski, Bricklayer with Frontier Masonry/Union Member of BAC Local 1 Saskatchewan.

I've been in the bricklaying trade for more than four years. I'm also a national representative for an organization called Build Together, which promotes careers in the skilled construction trades and helps mentor and support women as they progress in their careers.

Many things drew me to bricklaying. I wanted a job that allowed me to be active, work outdoors and be creative. As a single mother, bricklaying was the best choice in that it provided good hours and financial stability. The Build Together initiative has also been a really amazing opportunity to make a difference for women in trades, especially since women currently make up roughly four per cent of the construction workforce.

My job is very rewarding. I'm honoured to be able to build structures that will exist for hundreds of years, and it's a privilege to be able to fix up and restore old heritage structures. One of the best perks? Getting sunshine and fresh air every day is so good for the soul!

In fact, I think more youth should look into careers in the trades — you get paid to learn, you don't accumulate years of student debt, and you gain valuable skills that can be used for a lifetime.

Jenna Lipinski is on the far right, with two other members of Build Together — a national program that promotes, supports and mentors women in the skilled construction trades. CONTRIBUTED

HOW TO START

As with most trades, apprenticeships are the standard route for bricklayers and stonemasons. Apprentices will undergo approximately 1,600 hours of on-the-job and classroom training to learn the essentials of bricklaying: mathematics, blueprint reading and drafting, grouting, mortar masonry, building code compliance and structure building. Some provinces, such as Alberta and Saskatchewan, require professionals to earn certification as a journeyperson before practising in the field full time.

WHERE YOU CAN GO

Bricklayers are typically employed by general contractors and construction firms specializing in building restoration, landscaping, fireplace and heater-system masonry, stonecutting and interior design. Some professionals seek training in traditional bricklaying techniques and architecture history to work specifically on historical buildings. Others transition into rewarding careers as project managers, foremen, small business owners or contractors, as projects are virtually limitless in most urban centres.

NEXT CAREER STEP

Obtainment of the Interprovincial Standards' Red Seal will enable bricklayers to work anywhere in Canada. It's also a highly sought-after credential overseas. Bricklayers will also need to maintain current knowledge of standard first aid, scaffolding awareness, hazard identification, forklift operations and respiratory protection.

THE BASICS: Bricklayer

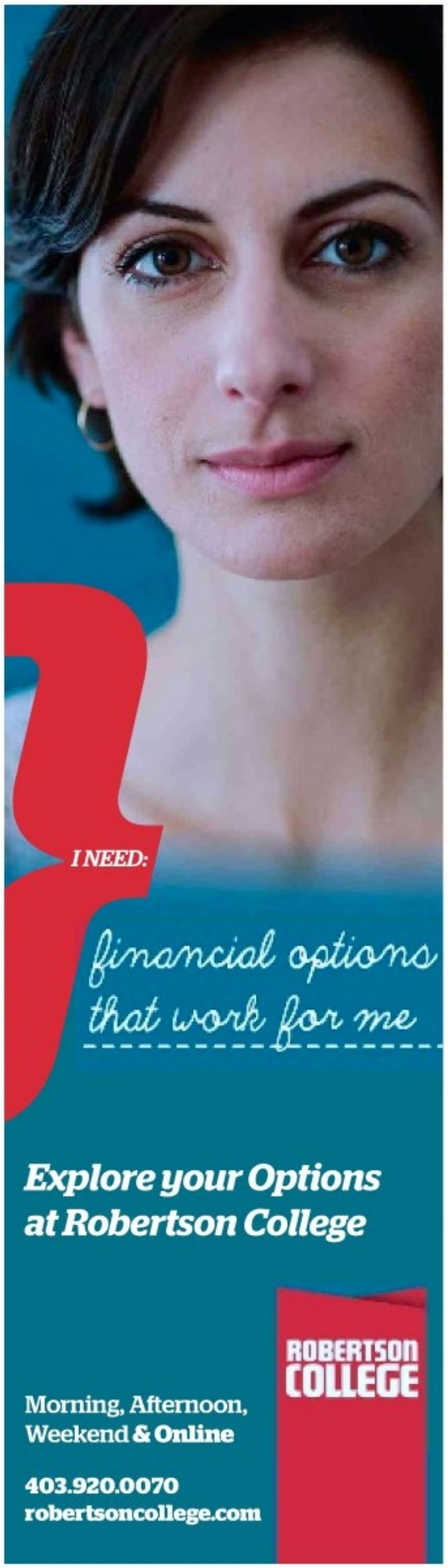
$52,414

Median annual salary for a Red Seal bricklayer, with the potential to earn upwards of **$80,000** with over 10 years of experience.

+14%

Projected job growth rate over the next eight years.

Data for this feature was provided by payscale.com, careersinconstruction.ca, nscc.ca and onetonline.org



JOHANNA SCHNELLER
WHAT I'M WATCHING

Merry Murdoch

THE SHOW: Once Upon a Murdoch Christmas
THE MOMENT: The buildup

Police constable George (Jonny Harris) enters HQ holding a crate aloft. "It's arrived, lads," he announces. "My latest novel."

"It's just pictures," says Henry (Lachlan Murdoch).

"This is a literary innovation," George counters. "It's a novel you can read in half an hour."

"One of your Jumpin' Jack books?" asks Jackson (Kristian Bruun).

"Yes, but he does more than jump," George says. "He has all manner of devices. His shoes have wheels, which allow him to move quick as a flash."

"But he still jumps," Henry says. "Why don't you call him Jumpin' Jack Flash?"

"Because that would be ridiculous," George says.

Ho ho ho. That's a lengthy setup for a short punchline. But everything you need to know about this two-hour Christmas special — and Murdoch Mysteries, the series from which it's spun — can be found in this scene.

The bantering constables. The family-friendly groaners. The science-lite gadgetry that would have been innovative in 1890s Toronto. And while we're distracted by this buildup to the deliberately hokey pun, the writers layer in information that's going to come in handy later.

Breaking Bad it is not. But that's the point of Murdoch, it's Breaking Good. You know in the end, orphans will sing, icy hearts will melt in a Christmas Carol/It's a Wonderful Life mash-up, and another lame joke will arrive.

Sure enough: "You might as well have your hero fly, like some kind of superhuman being," George's illustrator scoffs.

"We could call him Superma . . . Super-human-man!" George says.

And to all a good night.

Once Upon a Murdoch Christmas airs Dec. 12 at 8 p.m. on CBC.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

Murdoch Mysteries serves up ham and cheesy jokes with a side of suspense in this year's Christmas special. CONTRIBUTED

Death Troopers bring on the dark force in Rogue One: A Star Wars Story. CONTRIBUTED

New Star Wars film best gift ever for loyal fans

REACTION

Social media lights up with rave reviews after premiere

The force is strong with Rogue One: A Star Wars Story, according to early reactions from the film's premiere Saturday night in Los Angeles.

Official reviews are under embargo until Tuesday morning in advance of the Dec. 16 release, but the crowd at the Pantages Theater went wild with applause as the credits rolled and took to social media to express their delight in the Star Wars spinoff film about the rebels who steal the plans for the Death Star. It's set right before the events of the original 1977 Star Wars.

Comedian Dane Cook suggested on Twitter that it might be "the best" Star Wars movie, while Rainn Wilson called it "amazing."

Actor Wil Wheaton said he hadn't loved a Star Wars movie as much since the original.

Chris Taylor — author of the book How Star Wars Conquered the Universe — wrote that the film was "heart-stopping and dark. Like darker than Empire Strikes Back dark."

There had been some handwringing from fans about the spinoff when the public learned that the production was undergoing expensive reshoots and bringing in veteran scribe Tony Gilroy to help out with the script.

Peter Sciretta, editor of the website Slashfilm.com, said that fans will be "very happy with Rogue One." He added that it didn't feel "neutered by reshoots." Steven Weintraub, editor of Collider.com, applauded the film's "incredible action" and script.

Many, like Entertainment Weekly's Anthony Breznican, singled out Donnie Yen's blind Jedi Chirrut Imwe and Alan Tudyk's droid K-2S0 as the standouts. The Daily Beast's Jen Yamato also praised Felicity Jones' heroine Jyn Erso and the film's "great hero turns."

"Rogue One" was directed by Gareth Edwards and also stars Diego Luna, Ben Mendelsohn, Riz Ahmed and Mads Mikkelsen.

It's the first of three planned spinoff films set in the "Star Wars" universe.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Fight for the ages saves day

UFC 206

Criticized card lit up by superb battle between Swanson, Choi

Joe Callaghan
Metro | Toronto

Three years of waiting. And then in the space of three rounds of bewitching brutality, fighting fires were reignited.

Canada has recently questioned its place in the new UFC world. But as the foundations of Toronto's Air Canada Centre were rocked to their core by a baby-faced Korean and a venerable veteran late Saturday night, a strained relationship was strengthened again.

UFC 206 had been blighted by disputes and disruptions to the point that some had threatened to boycott the organization's first pay-per-view event in Toronto since 2013.

Yet every soul who made their way to the ACC was treated to a card that defied all expectations and a fight for the ages when for a full 15 minutes, featherweights Cub Swanson and Doo-Ho Choi engaged in a barely believable war of attrition.

There had been sparks earlier in the night, Lando Vannata's sumptuous spinning wheel kick KO of John Makdessi chief among them. The back-to-back submission victories for Canadian fighters Antoine Aubin-Mercier and Misha Cirkunov also raised temperatures.

Doo-Ho Choi and Kevin Luke "Cub" Swanson gave UFC 206 a much-needed jolt of magic on Saturday night in Toronto. PETER POWER/THE CANADIAN PRESS

But for all that, it was Swanson and Choi who delivered something else, something truly worth waiting for. The second round in particular served up five minutes of the kind of mind-bending mayhem that at this kind of peak, few sporting organizations can match. There wasn't a fan left in their seat at the end of the round as both fighters had to be helped to theirs.

Swanson, who has seen his share of fighting nights — good and bad, took immense pride in delivering such a soaring high when the expectations of so many in the house had been so low.

$1.8M

The amount of gate revenue generated for UFC 206 in Toronto. Compare that to the $18M generated by UFC 205 in New York.

"It definitely means a lot to me because there was a lot of people talking crap about this card," said Swanson afterwards, the decision having gone his way on all judges' scorecards. "It was the forgotten card. I was disrespected by that. You know people were even talking about boycotting the card. I'm glad that people got their money's worth. I'm glad I had that performance here, around a great crowd."

Such was the calibre of the contest that the main and co-main event which followed could never live up to what had come before, even if Cowboy Cerrone did his best with a shuddering head kick KO of Matt Brown that again raised the rafters.

The headline act largely struggled to do likewise. Having missed weight and seen his chance of an interim title go with it, Anthony Pettis's miserable week was compounded as he played right into the punishing hands of Max Holloway, crowned the interim featherweight champion after a third-round stoppage.

While the hordes drifted out into the early hours of Sunday morning satisfied with all this bang for their buck, the UFC's money men might not have been so buoyant. UFC 206's commercial, rather than critical, success is likely to decide how quickly the organization returns.

The new ownership regime have already stated aims at growing profits exponentially — in a hurry. With that in mind, the early numbers from Saturday framed the night a little differently.

The Air Canada Centre was officially sold out with a declared attendance of 18,057, yet the gate revenue was just US$1.8M.

The organization's previous PPV night, UFC 205 in New York — admittedly a one-off mega-event — made a gate of almost $18M from a crowd of 20,000. A better context may be that Toronto's most recent PPV to this — UFC 165 in 2013 — made a marginally bigger profit in spite of selling 3,000 less tickets.

Given the hectic nature of the fight game, quite a few bridges will be crossed before the UFC are back in town again. But on Saturday — thanks in huge part to the enthralling exploits of Swanson and Choi — many more bridges were repaired.

Toronto's fighting fires have been relit. It's up the UFC to now keep them burning.

CURLING

Grand Slam wins for Jacobs, Einarson

He took the scenic route, but Brad Jacobs and his rink from Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., finally won in front of their hometown crowd.

After losing in the final in their last Grand Slam of Curling event in Sault Ste. Marie back in 2014, Jacobs and his team beat Winnipeg's Reid Carruthers 4-2 on Sunday afternoon to win The National title. "Relief is a good word to use," Jacobs said following the win. "On his last shot, I was literally praying that he would not make the shot.

Jacobs earned his berth in the final thanks to a 5-3 win over Brad Gushue of St. John's, N.L., in the semifinal. Carruthers entered the final unbeaten after going 4-0 in the round robin and then beating Sweden's Niklas Edin 7-0 in the semifinal in just five ends.

On the women's side, a pair in the seventh end was the difference as Winnipeg's Kerri Einarson downed Switzerland's Silvana Tirinzoni 5-3. With the score tied at three, Einarson picked up the deuce and ran Tirinzoni out of rocks in the eighth end to win.

"It's just amazing," Einarson said of winning the title. "On the last shot I just felt goosebumps down my entire body."The win is the first Grand Slam win for the Manitoba rink.

For Einarson, the win came after Tirinzoni beat her 7-1 in six ends during the second draw.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dylan Strome will return to Team Canada for the world juniors this holiday season. FRANCOIS LAPLANTE/FREESTYLEPHOTO/GETTY IMAGES

WORLD JUNIOR

Strome keen to make amends for Canada

The five players returning from Canada's team at last year's world junior hockey championship feel they've got something to prove the second time around.

Dylan Strome, Mathew Barzal, Julien Gauthier, Mitchell Stephens and defenceman Thomas Chabot were on the Canadian squad that lost in the quarter-finals to host Finland and finished out of the medals a year ago. Now they want gold as the event shifts to Toronto and Montreal beginning Dec. 26.

"It's pretty easy to remember," Strome said Sunday as a four-day team selection camp opened at the Centre d'Excellence Sports Rousseau. "It's not a good feeling.

"So many friends and people in your country watch the game, so you want to be the guy who wins the gold medal. Unfortunately we fell short, but we've got another chance this year."

The 10-team tournament for players under 20 will be played in Canada's two biggest cities for the second time in three years and, much like in 2015 when Canada won gold on home ice, they will have a relatively experienced team. Eighteen of the 31 players in camp are 19 years old and they will likely take most of the sports when the roster is trimmed to 22 at the end of camp.

The go-to players will be the returnees, led by Strome, the third overall pick in the 2015 NHL draft who started the season with the Arizona Coyotes before being returned to the Erie Otters of the Ontario Hockey League. What Strome learned in Finland was how quickly the tournament can end. "You've got to take every day like it's your last," he said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bell tolls for Bills as Steelers prevail

NFL

Buffalo on verge of playoff elimination with latest loss

Le'Veon Bell stepped up with Ben Roethlisberger struggling on Sunday in Buffalo.
TOM SZCZERBOWSKI/GETTY IMAGES

When Big Ben doesn't have his 'A' Game, the Pittsburgh Steelers showed they have a more than capable Plan B in continuing their late-season playoff push.

That's 'B' as in Bell.

With quarterback Ben Roethlisberger struggling once again with his accuracy on the road, the Steelers resorted to handing the ball off to Le'Veon Bell in sparking a 27-20 win over the Buffalo Bills on Sunday.

Despite a slick, snow-covered field, Bell had no trouble with his footing to score three times and set a franchise record with 236 yards rushing.

The Steelers (8-5) won their fourth in a row to keep pace in the AFC playoff hunt.

"How much can I appreciate it? About as much as any Steeler fan. Awesome. Awesome. Awesome. Awesome," Roethlisberger said of Bell's performance. "When you're running the ball as well as you do, might as well stick to it."

After Roethlisberger threw two of his three interceptions in the first half, the Steelers opened the third quarter fully committed to feed Bell.

He delivered by rushing nine times for 72 yards and cap an 82-yard drive by waltzing into the end zone untouched from five yards out to put the Steelers ahead 21-7. Add in 62 yards receiving, Bell accounted for 298 of Pittsburgh's 460 yards, and he single-handedly outgained Buffalo's 275 yards.

The loss left Buffalo (6-7) on the fringes of contention and placed the team in jeopardy of extending the NFL's longest playoff drought to 17 seasons.

The Bills faltered on both sides of the ball, raising questions about the futures of both coach Rex Ryan and quarterback Tyrod Taylor beyond this season.

Ryan was noncommittal in saying, "we'll see," when asked whether Taylor will remain his starter.

Ryan was defiant when asked about whether he deserved a shot to continue on the job beyond his second season.

"What do you think I'm going to say? You're dang right I do," Ryan said. "It hasn't gone exactly the way I wanted it to go, that's obvious. But we have three games left and we'll try to win every one of them."

BAD BEN

Though Roethlisberger improved to 4-3 on the road this season, he continues to struggle away from the friendly confines of Heinz Field.

Roethlisberger went 17 for 31 for 220 yards against Buffalo, and is 147 of 247 for 1,618 yards with eight touchdowns and eight interceptions on the road. He's 4-1 at home, where he is 136 of 193 for 1,636 with 17 touchdowns and three interceptions.

HITTING 100

Steelers coach Mike Tomlin's regular-season record improved to 100-57, making him the 40th NFL coach and third with Pittsburgh to reach 100 wins.

"I congratulated him. I gave him the game ball," Roethlisberger said. "There's a lot of coaches that have coached this game and probably wish they had 100 wins, for him to get it, it's awesome."

The no-nonsense Tomlin didn't think much of the milestone, saying: "It means I've been here awhile."

NO OFFENCE

The Bills had minus-one yard through two series in the first quarter, becoming the NFL's first team this season to have negative yards through 15 minutes.

Buffalo didn't get into positive yardage until its first snap of the second quarter.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SUNDAY In Buffalo

STEELERS	BILLS
27	20

IN BRIEF

Packers not ready to pack it in after topping Seattle

A hobbled Aaron Rodgers passed for 246 yards and three touchdowns and the Green Bay Packers routed the Seattle Seahawks 38-10 on Sunday.

Seattle's Russell Wilson threw a career-high five interceptions and the Packers (7-6) won their third straight to keep playoff hopes alive.

They're two games back of first-place Detroit in the NFC North, but play division opponents in the last three weeks. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ouellette first to crack 300 points in women's league

Montreal Canadiennes forward Caroline Ouellette has become the first player to reach the 300-point milestone in the Canadian Women's Hockey League.

The veteran of Canada's women's Olympic team assisted on Ann-Sophie Bettez's power-play goal 12:49 into the first period of Montreal's 5-3 loss to the Calgary Inferno on Sunday to earn her 300th point.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Costa keeps Chelsea top

Fiery striker Diego Costa used his aggression in the right way to keep Chelsea top of the English Premier League on Sunday.

Costa muscled West Bromwich Albion defender Gareth McAuley off the ball before cutting inside and curling a shot into the top corner in the 76th minute to seal a 1-0 win for Chelsea at Stamford Bridge. Chelsea has won its last nine matches in the league to power to the top of the standings.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Toronto FC loses MLS Cup to Sounders in penalty kicks

Seattle goalkeeper Stefan Frei came back to haunt his former team as the Sounders defeated Toronto 5-4 in a penalty shootout to win the MLS Cup and end a long, chilly Saturday night.

It was 0-0 after regulation, with Frei keeping Seattle in the game with a marvellous save in extra time.

Defender Roman Torres was the unlikely hero for the Sounders, beat Clint Irwin with his penalty shot to end the drama. THE CANADIAN PRESS

MAKE IT TONIGHT

Creamy Pea Tagliatelle

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

This is our new favourite dish for three important reasons: 1) It's simple 2) It has an impossibly creamy sauce and you basically do nothing to achieve it 3) outside of toast, it's so fast.

Ready in 20 minutes
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 500 g tagliatelle pasta
- 2 cups frozen peas
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 cup creme fraiche
- 3 tsp chopped chives or flat-leaf parsley

Directions

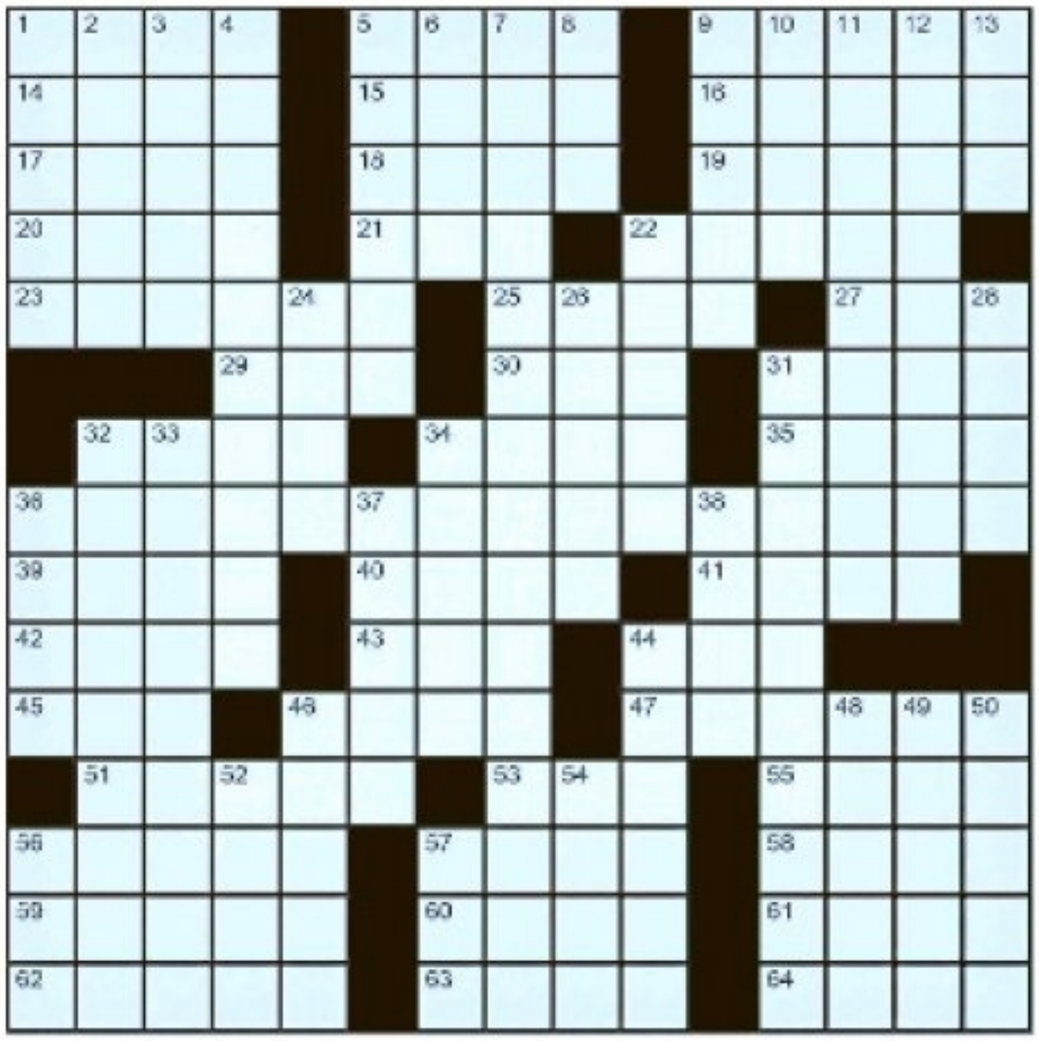
1. Cook the tagliatelle according to package directions. In the last minute of the pasta cooking process, drop the peas into the water. Drain both the pasta and peas.

2. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat the oil and saute the onion and garlic for 5 minutes until fragrant. Stir in the creme fraiche. Add the pasta and peas, folding them with tongs to coat the pasta with the sauce. Sprinkle with chopped chives or flat-leaf parsley and serve.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. __ Mountain (Year-round recreation destination in Ontario)
5. Unfreeze
9. Big blooper
14. Santa __, __ (Capital and its American state, briefly)
15. Courtney Love band
16. Patrons' provisions-picking props
17. Princess in "Star Wars" (1977)
18. Lasso
19. Bonus
20. __ (Play's opening)
21. 'Pepper' ending (Pizza topping)
22. Ancient language
23. Police officer's interest: 2 wds.
25. At hand
27. Pose for a painting
29. __ Vegas
30. Earth invaders, commonly
31. Canadian actor Mr. Rogen
32. Hideaway
34. "Who Is Harry Kellerman and Why __ __ Saying Those Terrible Things About Me?" (1971)
35. Verifiable
36. Home in downtown Toronto of The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada (Reserve regiment for which Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, is the Colonel-in-Chief): 3 wds.
39. Real Shannon
7. #1-Across in the Wintertime: 3 wds.
8. Diminutive
9. Makeup application mistake
10. "America's __ Top Model"
11. Disease immunizer
12. What a newly-moved-into home often needs
13. "Invasion __ __" (1985) starring Chuck Norris
22. __ printer
24. 50+ org. in The States
26. Mr. Hawke
28. "Or so __ say." (Apparently)
31. Plots
32. Telephone ringy-dingy that's not long distance: 2 wds.
33. Hair dye shade: 2 wds.
34. Jennifer __ (Canadian actress of ABC sitcom "The Goldbergs")
36. __-mucil (Fiber supplement brand)
37. "Garfield: __ __ of Two Kitties" (2006)
38. Famous painting, with Lisa
44. About [abbr.]
46. Pair of pants part
48. Overhead
49. Dogma
50. Strain
52. Fury
54. Like sludge that's leaking out
56. Kilos alternatives
57. __ and don'ts
40. Identical
41. Elm: French
42. Bills in restaurants
43. __ pollution
44. "Is there __ left?"
45. __ clear
46. Sommelier's serving
47. Epicurean's refined asset
51. Particular pink
53. Drench
55. Wild goat
56. Hawaiian veranda
57. Gateway
58. __ the wiser
59. Skyline structures, shortly
60. Rice-shaped pasta
61. Best __ (Greatest)
62. Rain/snow mix
63. "Renegade" rockers
64. Paving stone

DOWN
1. A Sharp's other name: letter + wd.
2. Bloodsucker
3. Amalgamate
4. Web marketer's address groupings: 2 wds.
5. Sofa blankets
6. Blind Melon singer

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
Be careful, because this is an accident-prone day due to the tension building up before tomorrow's Full Moon. Think twice before you speak or act.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Your focus is on money, cash flow and earnings, as well as major purchases today. You might do some shopping therapy because of tension before tomorrow's Full Moon. Caution.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Today the Moon is in your sign, and you feel the buildup before tomorrow's Full Moon in your sign. This means you have to be patient with partners and close friends.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Don't set high standards for yourself that are too tough to achieve. Go easy on yourself, because tomorrow is the Full Moon. You have enough to deal with.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You might feel a buildup of tension with a close friend, especially a female acquaintance. Or this could happen between you and a member of a group. Just be patient and diplomatic.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You feel the pressure of trying to keep everyone happy at home and at work building up within you. Of course, this is impossible. (However, you can't ignore home and family.)

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
This is a mildly accident-prone day because of the energy building up before tomorrow's Full Moon. Don't rush things. Do not be hasty. Stay mellow.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Disagreements about shared property, inheritances and such might arise now. If so, they will be settled about three days from now.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Tomorrow, the only Full Moon opposite your sign all year will take place. This is why you feel tension with others today as this energy builds up.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Difficulties with co-workers might arise today, because everyone feels the energy of tomorrow's Full Moon building up within them.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Be patient with romantic partners today. Likewise, parents need to be patient with their kids. Everybody feels a buildup today before tomorrow's Full Moon.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Do not let the demands of family interfere too much with your job at this time, because your job is important. Tomorrow's Full Moon creates this tension.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

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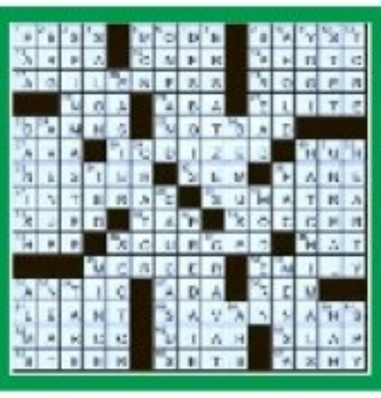

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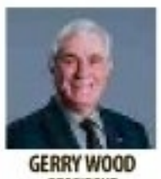

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11 YEARS

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23 YEARS

JOHN QUINLAN
14 YEARS

BILLY MANSOUR
2 YEARS

SCOTT SCHINNOUR
6 YEARS

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8 YEARS

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